



INTERNATIONAL
HELLENIC
UNIVERSITY

Sustainable human resource management

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SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION & LEGAL STUDIES

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Master of Science (MSc) in Sustainable Development

FEBRUARY 2016

Thessaloniki – Greece

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February 2016
Thessaloniki - Greece

Abstract

This dissertation was written as part of the MSc in Sustainable Development at the International Hellenic University. The concept of sustainability is now a key factor, for business and society and for the environment as well. The question, which enters now, is how the concept of sustainability should be connected or implemented in human resource management. The existing literature shows the need for the emergence of a new concept: (sustainable human resource management).

The discussion on the relationship, between sustainability and human resource management, admit more and more attention to be paid by academics and other specialists and professionals. It is commonly know that in any theoretical study, all factors should be taken into consideration, so as, a clear view, about the mentioned study, to be finally extracted. In this paper particular attention is paid, to draw the definitions and the evolution of the concepts of SD, CSR and HRM.

The objective of this paper is to present the current theoretical approaches in the literature on: a) the classification and the description of the theoretical views on the concepts of CSR, SD and HRM b) put these concepts to the wider theoretical scope, so they became endeavor for alignment and consistency of them and c) finally to present the four models of Sustainable Human Resource Management that currently dominate the literature.

Keywords: Sustainability, Human Resource Management (HRM), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sustainable Human Resource Management

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February 2016

Preface

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Marcus Wagner, for his valuable contribution, during the writing of this dissertation. I would also like to thank Dr. George Baniyas (Academic Assistant– IHU) for his valuable advice, his thoughtful directions and interventions.

I would also like to express my deeply grateful to my family, and especially to my husband, for supporting my effort, so that I found the strength to continue, even when everything seemed impossible to be accomplished. Also special thanks to my daughters, who gave me the boost to evolve and hopefully I became an inspiration for them.

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1. Introduction

Sustainability is a significant part of modern research of management and is referred as a “hot topic” (Wilkinson, 2001), and as a “mantra” for this century (Ehnert, 2014). Paradoxically, however, the scholars did not deal a lot with the implementation of sustainability in the management of human resources, except only recently (Ehnert, 2014; Inyang et al., 2011).

Great attention, began to be given to the meaning and application of sustainability of businesses since, United Nation’s World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED or ‘Brundtland Commission’) published its report in 1987 (WCED, 1987). The purpose was to create an international community of the objectives of sustainability, which would pinpoint and identify international problems, propose solutions and strives for constant awareness of people and particularly to give them understand, that as a society, relied too much on the economic development, should constantly care about social development and the protection of the planet. Dealing with sustainability is more than ever timely as we are in the midst of a global economic crisis.

The human resource administration is well placed to play an important role in achieving the social, economic and environmental goals of the enterprises. Enterprises should be benefited by the use of sustainability principles. People in businesses are considered as one of the main key resources. So in order to avoid scarcity and reduction of this main resource, the principles of sustainability should be implemented by the professionals. The importance of effective and efficient human resource management is along with the success of the firm and gradually leads to the holistic business sustainability. “Firms are increasingly called upon to play a positive role, and thus contribute to a more sustainable development” (Kolk and Tulder, 2010).

This paper begins, reviewing the definitions of Human Resource Management, the evolution of the concept of Human Resource Management and the necessities that led to the emergence of Strategic Human Resource Management, and eventually to the emergence of Sustainable Human Resource Management. The next chapter ana-

lyzes the concept of sustainability, the different definitions of sustainability and the history of the evolution of the concept. The roles of companies concerning Sustainable Development are often referred as responsibilities to society, or as a necessity to reduce the negative impacts of businesses (McWilliams and Siegel, 2011). As most scholars, dealing with the connection of sustainability with the management of human resources decide that are affected by corporate social responsibility, this paper continuously analyzing the concept of CSR, its evolution, its definitions and its dimensions. As Baumgarthner (2013), states: "CSR is usually associated as approach to integrate social and environmental aspects into corporate activities".

The last chapter outlines the nexus between sustainability and HRM as well as the nexus between Corporate Social Responsibility and Human Resource Management. And also indentifies that sustainable Human Resource Management is the key of the use of human resources and thus creates a culture of sustainability in businesses.

2. The importance of Human Resource Management

2.1 Definition

The modern business environment, the globalization, the expansion of business in new markets abroad, the fierce competition, the continuous acquisitions and mergers, technological change, uncertainty, the reductions of human resources, the high demands of customers and other interests groups, such as employees, shareholders, community, set new standards, regarding the current work environment, which is characterized as environment of high demands (Tulgan, 2004). In this business environment, the financial assets are looking for new ideas and methods to invest. These are the workers as the asset of knowledge is for many, most importantly competitive advantage. (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). The competitive advantage of businesses that tries to cope with the sweeping changes of globalization is located in the actual capacity of its human resources. Besides, basic parameters of success of an undertaking depend on the people, such as the strategy, the systems, the procedures, the use of technology, culture and the ability to continue learning. Hence, the traditional concept, which considered the human factor as a cost for a business, now has been turned into a strategic resource. People's desire to invest in knowledge and talents in order to achieve the objectives of the companies, is highlighted by the interpretation given by Jackson and Schuler (2000). They define the term of 'human resources' as the whole talent of disposal for performance of all people in an organization that can contribute to the creation and completion of the mission, vision, strategy and its objectives.

So, it must be realized the importance of human capital management, which beyond the mental, includes the emotional and social capital, i.e. the feelings of the people determine their capacity for action. Therefore the personnel management is a major component of the larger administrative operation. It is a major subsystem of all businesses. The personnel administration, in recent years has become a science, which studies the staff not only as a factor causing cost, as mentioned above, but also as an asset on which is required to invest on. The above essential changes in market environment, have led to the gradual replacement of the term personnel management

from the term human resource management. Table 1 imprints a few differences between the personnel management and human resource management (Guest, 1987; Storey, 1992).

Table 1 – Differences between the personnel management and human resource management (Guest, 1987; Storey, 1992)

Dimension	Personnel management	Human resource management
Time and planning perspective	Short term, reactive, ad hoc, marginal	Long term, proactive, strategic, integrated
Psychological contract	Compliance	Commitment
Control systems	External controls	Self-control
Rules	Importance of devising clear rules/ mutuality	'Can do' outlook: impatience with 'rule'
Corporate plan	Marginal to	Central to
Employee relations perspective	Pluralist, collective, low trust	Unitarist, individual, high trust
Roles	Specialist/professional	Largely integrated into line management
Evaluation criteria	Cost minimization	Maximum utilization (human asset accounting)
Job design	Division of labour	Teamwork

Personnel management deals with people and their life cycle within an organization. Generally, the workers engaged in an organization, are trained, offered their services, evaluated, rewarded and receded. Hence, the tools of personnel management are: attracting and selection, training, wages and benefits for achieving satisfactory performance immovable end of the withdrawal. While, at the same time, in larger companies the contact and negotiations with trade unions to maintain industrial peace become a central concern. Often, these functions are done iteratively without examining their effectiveness. Within this conceptual model the organizational environment assumes to be a fact and Personnel Management endeavor to harmonize the available mechanistic tools with no attempt to change them, to examine their return or to connect them with business strategy (Torrington et al., 2005; Braton and Gold, 2007).

On the other hand, human resource management, while it contains all the previous elements, it gives emphasis to the interaction between the employee, its work and the business as a whole. More specifically human resource management can be defined as an array of roles and functions that recognize the importance of human fac-

tors at work and aims to create competitive advantages through strategic development of capable and dedicated human resources but also through the use of technical human resources management influencing the culture and structure of an enterprise. In this way human resource management contributes to harmonization with the general strategies and the environment of the business.

For Personnel Management, fundamental is the whole workforce, for human resource management is recourses (Torrington et al., 2005). The term human resource management is not easy to attribute. Torrington puts a very comprehensive definition: "Human resource management signifies more than an updating of the label; it also suggests a distinctive philosophy towards carrying out people-oriented organizational activities: one which is held to serve the modern business more effectively than 'traditional' personnel management" (Torrington et al., 2005). Human resource management is the basis of the administrative procedure, which gathers depending on the extent and scope of the enterprise, a number of important activities (Torrington et al., 2005). But also the definition of Braton and Gold (2007) is really representative: "Human resource management is a strategic approach to managing employment relations which emphasizes that leveraging people's capabilities is critical to achieving competitive advantage, this being achieved through a distinctive set of integrated employment policies, programs and practices."

The human resources management is concerned with the practices and policies needed in those areas which relate to staff matters. In a sense, all managers are HR managers, because everyone involved in activities such as attracting candidates, conducting interviews, the training of personnel. Specifically they recruit, train, evaluate, compensate and provide a safe environment for employees of a company. These practices and policies among others include: conducting job analyzes (determination of the nature of work of each employee), the planning of workforce needs and attract prospective employees, the selection of candidate employees, providing guidance and training for workers, performance appraisal, the management of wages and salaries, incentives and offers communication etc. Also included what one manager need to know on: equal opportunities, ethics and affirmative action, health, safety and ethical treatment of workers and to address complaints and labor relations. As rightly at-

tributed it a president of a company (Dessler, 2012): “for many years believed that the lack of funds is the main bottleneck to a growing run. I do not think now the case. I believe that halting growth caused by workers and the inability of the company to attract and retain a good workforce. I do not know any important work that has been behind the good ideas, dynamism and enthusiasm and stopped because of lack of funding. On the contrary, I know cases of companies whose growth stopped or hampered because they could not maintain an effective and enthusiastic workforce.”

At this point, the disagreement on the nature and importance of human resource management comes on. It is strongly discussed that aiming to essential changes in market environment; we must change the manner, in which we provide management of human resources, in order to achieve the effectiveness of HR capacity. This is because, the term human capital concerns those features that the people bring in their workplace, as, intellect, abilities, dedication, experience and skills and ability to learn. The above contribution of human resources in business varies and is often unpredictable. Precisely this indeterminacy of the contribution of workers in the activities of the enterprises makes the human resources the most demanding element of business inputs, in relation to their administration and their management. The nature of the human factor is the main driver of research in the field of human resource management. If we used positions and views of psychology we would say that the behavior of people in their workplace is a function of four, at least variables, such as: ability, motivation, perception of the role and circumstances. Sociology from another perspective emphasizes the problematic nature of human relations concerning mainly the interlinked problems of control and dedication. Human capital differs from the other resources, both, because each person is endowed with different abilities (including capacity, skills and knowledge), a different character, sex, conception of the role and experience, and also in motivation and dedication. In other words the workers differ from other resources because of their ability to assess and challenge the actions of the administration and because of elements like dedication and cooperation, which someone should try to win. People make the difference, and indeed people can create value (Braton and Gold, 2007).

2.2 History

Human resource management is scientific field where continuous changes are taken place, new issues are generated and new methods and skills are apparently evolved. Also, there is no standard model for human resource management strategies, which can be implemented by all organizations and businesses. This is the reason, that there are many different models for the interpretation of the evolution of the human resource management and management (Freitas et al. 2011). It is important to study the historical development of human resource management, as it will give us a better knowledge of its meaning and make us conscious of the needs for evolution and change. “Fashions come and go, and the same might be said about approaches to people management” (Bratton and Gold, 2007).

By the mid of 18th century, in England began an evolution that turned this country into a center of modern technology. This development led to the industrialization of production, a phenomenon hitherto unknown. The sequel was the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution was a particularly complex system, mixed with technical, economic and social turbulence, which led European societies from rural to industrial production. The newfangled economic system of capitalism initially created misery conditions of workers. Very few employers were interested in the workers who employed. Such an exception was the Wales businessmen Robert Owen, who identified earlier than his time (1800 AD), the necessity to improve working conditions and industrial relations. He also raised for the first time the issue of satisfaction of human needs. The English writer, Karew Ure was the first who formulated, through the work of the *Psychology of Manufactures*, in 1835, the view that, except engines, there is another dimension in factories and businesses, which is the human factor (Vaxevanidou, 2012).

Alongside, in the late 1890s and early 1900s, the science of industrial psychology appears with Hugo Munsterberg as a main representative. He suggested that the analysis of each work may have three dimensions: the physical, the mental and the emotional. In 1912 Ed. Cadbury, in his book *Experiments in Industrial Organization*, pointed out the importance of the relationship between welfare and efficiency: “the

supreme principle has been the belief that business efficiency and the welfare of employees, are but different sides of the same problem” (Legge, 2005). The same period of time (1911), Taylor raised the bases of Scientific Management, in his work: Principles of Scientific Management. His ideas there had been pioneered. He also raised the basic concepts of management, such as the timing of work and the analysis of movements to reduce costs and increase productivity. We must emphasize that he was the first who proposed to link productivity of the worker with the reward. Taylor formulated four principles of Administration, which are the following (Jamrog and Overholt, 2004):

- a) Development of administration as a science that deals with the work, in order to define the concept of "fair working days" and the "normal limits of performance".
- b) Scientific selection and gradual evolution of the staff.
- c) Combinations of science work and people who are selected and trained with scientific way
- d) Continuous and genuine cooperation between management and staff.

We must emphasize, that according to Taylor, basic obligation of the administration was and continues to be, the continuous training of staff, so that the staff to be able to respond each time the demands of work increased. Taylor also gave great emphasis on the need for specialized staff, in order to maximize company's profitability. This specialization, should not be limited only in the lower staff, but also apply to technical and higher levels of workers and employers. Despite the fact that, according to Taylor's theory, productivity in relation with the cost of production should be rewarded proportionally, companies did not show the appropriate concern. Taylor was accused for this and accepted strong criticism. However, it is noteworthy that his theories still apply today, mainly regarding with incitement of workers.

During World War I, there was a large demand for recruiting workers, particularly in war industry factories. At that period a large number of women enter the factories of war industry, due to high demand for war materials. The situation has created fertile ground in order to start a dialogue between government and employees. This resulted in an era of industrial relations policy. These conditions opened the way for the creation of Personnel Management. In the late 1930s, with the rise of trade and

industrial equipment systems, companies started interested in the development of administration and the education of their staff. The economic crisis of 1929, also known as a crash, had created the need for security and better living conditions of the staff. This resulted in the provision of the first pensions, the improvement of payments and the payment of holidays. During the Second World War, the government engaged to take measures in order to minors and unskilled women.

Taylor's Scientific Administration, during this period, influenced strongly the management theory. At the same time, it is also realized that the scientific management of the French Henry Fayol, had the same impacts. His work focused on the role of executive and operations management. Meanwhile, the Movement of Human Relations (1924-1950) was also developed, with main representative, the American Elton Mayo, who dealt with the socio internal business environment. More specifically, he established the science of human relations and he was the first who studied the causes of fatigue, the accidents, the occupational mobility, the rest intervals and the working conditions. He also established the School of Human Relations, giving particular emphasis on psychological factors that affect the performance of employees (Vaxevanidou, 2012). All the above mentioned issues shaped decisively the administration of human resources.

From the end of World War II begins the period of development of industrial relations. Negotiations of labor unions obtain an official nature. At the same time, the movements for social benefits are being extended. After 1945, the number of trade union representatives and trade institutions experienced a tremendous increase. For this reason, companies are seeking workers who were specialized in Personnel management. Because of the increased needs for finding specialized personnel administration, the Institute of Personnel Management was founded in England, in 1946 (Bratton and Gold, 2007). During the decades of 1950 and 1960, some special matters of administration were developed, such as, the individual needs of employees, the motivation, performance appraisal and training needs. This period, plenty of studies were carried out, contributing not only to the creation of a new science, but also to the business operation development, which called Personal Administration. As Bratton and Gold (2007) say, "this period was the golden age of Keynesian economic doctrine...and a pe-

riod when both Conservative and Labor governments, anxious to foster industrial peace through conciliation, mediation and arbitration, passed employment laws to improve employment conditions and extend workers' rights".

After the 1970s, with the advent of computers, personnel departments of companies designed new personnel charts, taking into account many variables, such as the supply and demand. Furthermore, this period, the basic characteristics of the work of personnel department are about to keep the data records of workers and to apply Staff Tests. In the late 1970s, the field of application of Personnel Administration, accepts greater extent and systematizes many of its administrative tools. Personnel Administration is so affected by this evolution that is being transformed to Human resource management. Furthermore the human factor is recognized as a resource for the enterprises, and also very important (Torrington, 2005).

From 1980 onwards, new approaches are being developed around the environment of the work. There is an explicit movement towards improvement of the products and services' quality. In parallel, in the 1980s, initiates the globalization, the intense competition among businesses and also the bloom of the Pacific economies (Sisson, 1990; Legge, 2005). All the above, resulted in a pressure on businesses both, in Europe and America and pushed them to search for executives who could operate effectively and use techniques and systems of modern management. "Focusing on the UK, this intensification of international competition has forced many companies to become more strategically aware" (Legge, 2005). The same period, the strategic role of human resource management is recognized, which must solve and manage the changes of the administration and create a new organizational culture. It must be pointed out that the terminology uses now the terms "human resource management" and "human resource development".

2.3 From Strategic to Sustainable Human Resource Management

2.3.1 Strategic Human Resource Management

Strategic Human Resource Management appeared in the decade of 1970s. It has been defined as a designed pattern which consists of human resources (labor

force) and the human resource management (function). These components have been designed so as to enable companies to fulfill their strategic and organizational goals and objectives (McMahan et al., 1999). This definition makes clear that the primary objective of the Human Resources Management Strategy is to contribute to the performance of the companies through increasing the likelihood of fulfillment of strategic objectives.

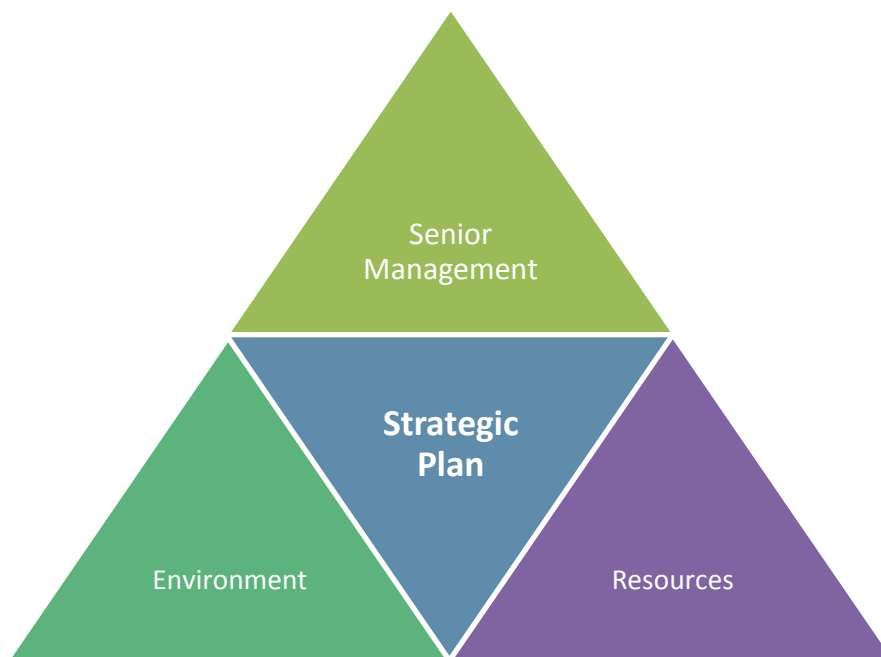


Figure 1 – The three traditional poles of a strategic plan (Bratton, 2007)

As Bratton and Gold (2007) state: “strategic management is best defined as a continuous process that requires a constant adjustment of three major interdependent poles; the values of senior management, the environment and the resources available” (Figure). Strategic Human Resource Management is an aggregation of policies and methods of Human Resources Management with objective to create professional skills and behaviors needed to achieve the company's strategic goals. As Othman (1996) says “the successful implementation of a strategy also has to be supported by an appropriate human resource system”. Martell and Carroll (1995) stress that “SHRM includes the following characteristics: a long term focus, linkage between HRM and

strategy processes, and the expectation that effective HRM policies should produce organizational performance benefits”. Schematically, we could describe the Strategic Management of Human Resources with the model as shown at Figure .

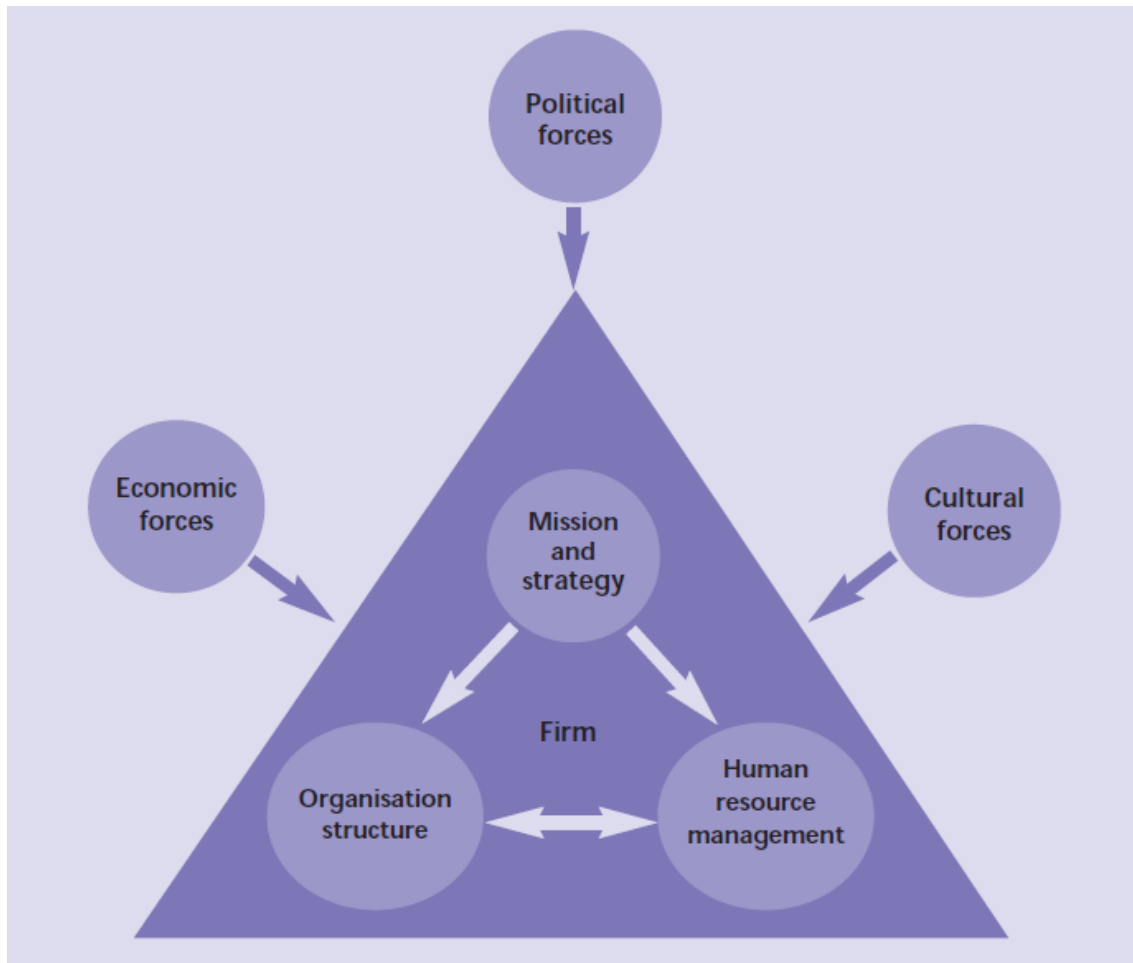


Figure 2 – Strategic Human Resources Management 'matching' model (Bratton and Gold, 2007)

The high competitive environment (economic, political, demographic and technological) resulted in an imminent implementation of Strategic Human Resource Management in companies. Excellent Human Resource consists of two components: excellence in human capital which has to do with highly skilled people and outstanding human procedure which is related with the services and communication among company's servants. The concept of Strategic Management was introduced in 1981 in the ar-

title «Human Resources Management: A Strategic Perspective» of Tichy, Fombrun and Devanna (Gary et al., 1998). Since then, the concept of Strategic Management has been sufficiently analyzed and great effort has been done to be differentiated from the traditional Human Resources Management.

Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000), transform the two basic models of strategic HRM; the control-based and the resource-based model to a new one that contains both of them involving also, the two dimensions of HR strategy the '*acquisition and development*' and the '*locus of control*' (Bratton and Gold, 2007) (Figure). The first dimension considers upgrading the existing human capital opposing to recruit them from the external labor market. Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000) call this dimension the 'make or buy' aspect. The other dimension examines if it could be preferable not to monitor employees' compliance in procedures since this could result in creating psychological problems. These two dimensions then are creating four types of human resource management strategies (Bratton and Gold, 2007).

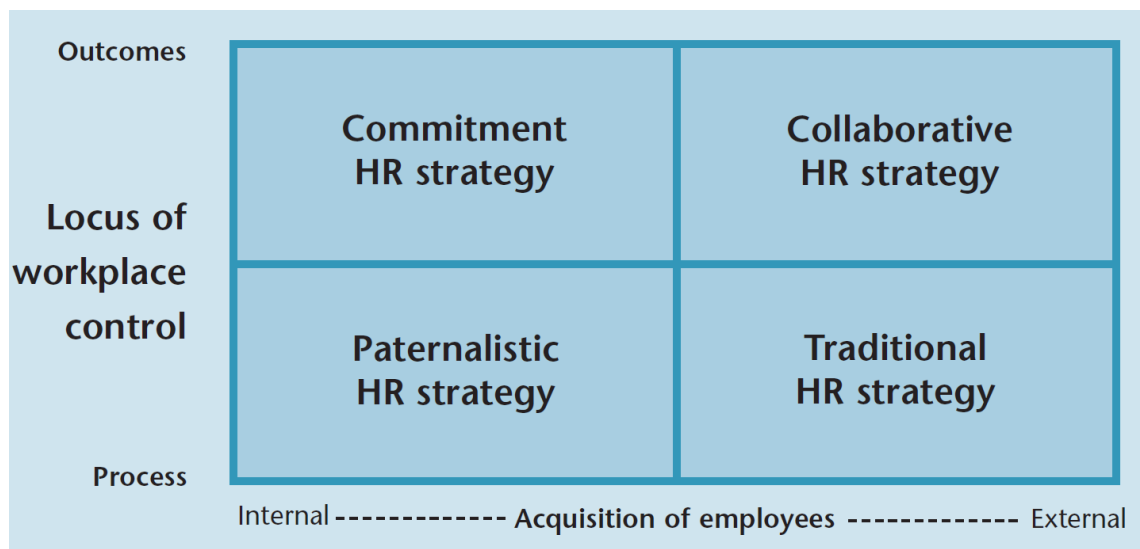


Figure 3– Categorizing human resource management strategies (Bratton and Gold, 2007)

The concept of Strategic Human Resource Management is progressive and not static. This concerns the creation of the theoretical frameworks for the development

of its measurement as well as the measurement of the results of its implementation in the operational performance (Kramar, 2014). The criticism of the Strategic Human Resource Management has to do mainly with the measurement of its performance. This happens because usually the measurement focuses on financial terms, “organizations are interested in a monetary return of investment of their human resource management implementations” (Pfeffer, 1998; Kramar, 2014). Obviously, to some extent, the focus on financial performance of the business cannot be discredited. There are many reports in the literature showing that the contribution of HRM on enterprise’s performance is positive (Nikandrou and Papalexandris 2007; Bratton and Gold 2007; Kramar, 2014). As highlighted by Kramar (2014), “Human resource management contributes to organizational performance by developing many positive mediating factors including improving productivity, positive social outcomes and reduced turnover”. Another criticism on Strategic human resource management has to do with the focus on specific stakeholders, the focus on strategic decision-making, the absence of internal strategies and the conceptualization of managerial control (Bratton and Gold, 2007). The economic performance of an enterprise determines its success. This alone is no longer sufficient: it must be combined with minimizing the ecological footprint and improving the environmental and social consequences (Sudin, 2011). Nowadays, the question if the Strategic Human Resource Management can help to attain environmental sustainability as well as social and economic emerges. The above question timidly began to appear from few researchers (Ehnert, 2012; Freitas et al., 2011; Rimanoczy and Pearson, 2010; Kramar, 2014; Mazur, 2015) who started dealing with the need to move from Strategic Human Resource Management to Sustainable Human Resource Management

2.3.2 The emergence of sustainable human resource management

Kochan, (2007) said about the emergence crisis which human resource management faced, that: “The human resource management profession faces a crisis of trust and a loss of legitimacy in the eyes of its major stakeholders. The two decade effort to develop a new ‘strategic human resource management’ role in organizations has failed to realize its promised potential of greater status, influence and achievement”. And Thompson (2011) stated, that HR architecture should broaden its

concept. Human history is characterized by changes and duration and this is reflected in the management of the human factor. Human resource management evolved and developed during the time (Figure) and this continuous evolution has sustainable HRM as the next step (Freitas et al., 2011).

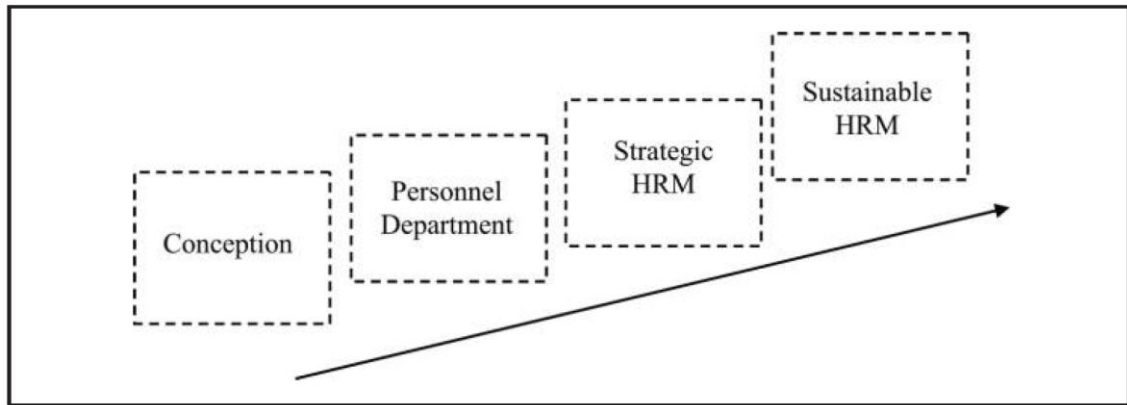


Figure 4 – Model for the evolution of HRM (Freitas et al., 2011)

As we can see in Figure 5, personnel management has given way to human resource management and this in turn to strategic human resource management. Sustain means to prolong, and sustainability is the ability to continue something without interruption for a long time. Human resource management is in action and needs immediate evolution which can be the sustainable human resource management.

3. Sustainability and Human Resource Management

3.1 Sustainability

Sustainability can be a $2+2=5$ (or even 50) game (Ellington, 1999). This Algebraic definition shows that sustainability is characterized by complexity and of a great degree of difficulty within its concept. Once starting analyzing sustainability, it is difficult to stop. As Lourenco (2012) says, sustainable development is a balance of economic, social and environmental outcomes in order to provide benefits to stakeholders. Sustainability is the science of everything and is basically the way we think and act as humans' beings. The term was first used in Forestry where it meant never logging more from that the forest can replace. We met the word Nachhaltigkeit (the German term for sustainability) for first time with the above meaning in 1713, by Hans Carl von Carlowitz, a German scientist. Von Carlowitz suggested that sustainable forest management is achieved only when cut trees immediately replenished by new ones. The concern about the preservation of natural resources is perpetual: in the Stone Age, our ancestors were concerned about the preservation of their food and the first farmer's tried to find out ways to preserve the fertility of the soil (Kuhlman, 2010).

Table 2 – Definitions of Sustainability

Definition	Reference
It is possible to alter these growth trends and to establish a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable into the future	Meadows ,1972
Sustainable development is the improvement in the population's quality of life while taking into consideration the ecosystem's regenerating capacity.	Catton, 1986
The development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs	Brundtland Commission, 1987
Sustainable development is the development that continues	World Bank, 1992
Long term continuous development of the society aimed at satisfaction of humanity's need at present and in the future via rational usage and replenishment of natural recourses, preserving the Earth for future generations	Rio Declaration on Environment and development, 1992
Development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development	United Nations, 1997
Sustainability can be a $2+2=5$ (or even 50) game	Elkington, 1999

The term sustainability means ability of something to endure perpetually. It means how biological system remains diverse and productive indefinitely. It can be said that sustainability is closely related to the science of economics, because deals mainly with the insufficient amount of resources. The concept of Sustainable development term, met with the a wider acceptance by Scientific Society, when it was used in the Brundtland Commission's report, from the United Nation's World Commission on Environment and Development, in 1987. There, Sustainable development was defined as "the development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This definition of sustainability was proved very instrumental. As Kuhlman 2010 says, the question, which Brundtland and her colleagues posed to themselves was: "how can the aspirations of the world's nations for a better life be reconciled with limited natural resources and the dangers of environmental degradation?" The WCED connect sustainability with environmental unity and social equity as well as with economic well-being (Linnenluecke, 2010). The attempt to relate the economic development with social equity has been a matter of interest for the last 150 years. After the World War II, international interest of alleviating the poverty, reducing inequality and to improve the global standard of living was appeared (Truman, 1949). Moreover sustainability faced the challenge to connect the current capacity of natural systems with the most important challenges that our planet confronts. Ciegis (2009), supports that despite the fact that the substance of the concept of sustainable development is quite clear, the accurate explanation and analysis of the term has created a lot of discussions. He continues that the terminology problems are due to the dual nature of the sustainable development concept, covering development as well as sustainability. In 1992, the World Bank used few words to describe sustainable development: "sustainable development is the development that continues" (World Development Report, 1992). In 1992, in Earth Summit in Rio the Brundtland definition had a widespread acceptance by politicians, business leaders and NGOs (Dyllick and Hockers, 2002). The declaration in Rio, described sustainable development as "long term continuous development of the society aimed at satisfaction of humanity's need at present and in the future via rational usage and replenishment of natural recourses, preserving the Earth for future generations" (Rio Declaration on Environment and development, 1992). The term sustainabil-

ity has been used in recent years as much, and sometimes so unexpectedly, so that some environmentalists suggest not to be used any longer (Heinberg, 2010). However, despite the above mentioned view, sustainability is the key factor for somebody in order to proceed to long-term planning. Here, we must refer to the relatedness of the term. Is there anything on earth that can last forever? As Bonevac, (2010) says: “the finite size of resources, ecosystems, the environment and the Earth, lead to the most fundamental truth of sustainability: when applied to material things, the term “sustainable growth” is an oxymoron”.

Considering again the definition of the Brundtland Commission, should be noted that it contained two conflicting concepts, development and sustainability. The strength and relevance of the original Brundtland concept was precisely that it questioned how to reconcile the goal of development with sustainability (Kuhlman and Farington, 2010). Here lies the difficulty of achieving sustainable development, because it two seemingly opposed concepts (development - sustainability) have to be combined, simultaneously. Ciegis et al. (2009), refers that: “the idea of perfect complementary interaction between the environment and the development is one of the interpretations of the philosophy of the Brundtland Commission”. To what should be also paid attention in the definition of the Brundtland Commission, are the concepts: needs and limitations. They are two concepts that are directly related to the science of economics and the means and purposes of the business. Also, the term needs refers to humans, which means that the concept of sustainable development is anthropocentric (Ciegis et al. 2009). The complexity and multidimensional are the difficulties contained in sustainable development, which attempts to combine the equality with the yield, and the integration of equality in economic, social and environmental issues.

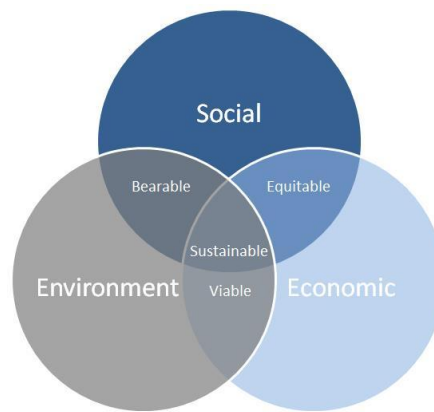


Figure 5 – Pillars of Sustainability (Elkington, 1994)

The definition of the Brundtland Commission recognizes the three pillars of sustainability which are economy, society and the environment (Figure 5). These three pillars reflect the concern of all, not only on the environmental pollution but also on the impact in societies and the continuing degradation of human resources, which are due to the excessive (unsustainable) growth of economy (Kramar, 2014). The target of 3 P's was to operationalize corporate social responsibility (Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010). Loucerno et al. (2012) state that “the goal of sustainable development is to promote an instrumental view that the economic, social and environmental bottom-lines are interconnected and mutually reinforcing”. It is noteworthy that from the perspective of game theory and from a standpoint of market failure, some argue that opportunities can be found during the course of attempts to solve difficult social and/or environmental problems, which eventually will create economic benefit (Loucerno et al., 2012). The social side of sustainability often overridden by the environmental and economic sides. But it is imperative to understand that inequality makes societies weak and leads to social and political conflicts, which subsequently affect the economy. “Thinking on the social aspect of sustainability has been relatively neglected and is by far the least developed” (Heinberg, 2010).

Heinen, (1994) and Radermacher (1999) pointed out that there is no consensus in the definition of sustainable development, mainly because of the diversity of scientific fields, which involved with sustainability. Radermacher gave one of the best interpretations of the term, who highlights the basic elements in the philosophy of Sustainable Development as a guideline (Table 3).

Table 3 – Five basic elements (Radermacher, 1999)

	Radermacher' s five basic elements
1	Sustainability (keep capital intact!) and development (increase your income!) have to be balanced out. Neither isolated sustainability nor pure development is successful long-term concepts (<i>guiding principle</i>).
2	Globalization: today's economic, social and environmental developments and problems tend to untie from national boundaries.
3	Long time scales: cause-effect-relations of environmental problems trend to extend and to untie from periodic boundaries.
4	Uncertainty: damages from environmental deterioration cannot be precisely measurable but only predicted in terms of risk and probability
5	From an economic point of view environmental damages are caused by external effects of individual production and consumption decisions, and they often affect natural elements which have the character of public goods

The relationship of sustainability with businesses initially concerned the responsibilities of businesses. The term, which nowadays usually used to describe organizations responsibilities, is corporate social responsibility (CSR) or corporate social performance (CSP). Besides the economic or the legal responsibilities, businesses have also ethical responsibilities. Firms have to maintain and grow their economic, social and environmental capital base while actively contributing to sustainability in the political domain (Dyllic and Hockers, 2002).

3.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

3.2.1 The evolution

The evolution of corporate social responsibility refers to changes through out the time, about corporations engagement, to the communities, cultures, societies and environments within they operate (Singh, 2014). This is really something new in business philosophy, as in whole human history, where the objective of companies dominated by the monolithic view to maximize profit and increase shareholder value.

Corporate social responsibility is a product of the 20th century, but mainly early 1950's (Carroll, 2008), when it began the scientific analysis and related research. Elements of its concept however, appear on the march of man as a businessman and

member of the society since the time it started, creating empires, kingdoms and states. Its roots are found deep into the centuries and this is reflected in some typical examples. In ancient Mesopotamia (1700 BC) King Hammurabi sentenced to death in construction, agricultural and workers who from negligence caused injury, death or dissatisfaction to citizens. There are also reports that in ancient Greece (5th century BC) the most affluent professionals made donations in order all the social classes to attend cultural events in the theater. The appearance of Christianity put humanity at the heart, stimulating philosophy and political professionals and introducing the logic of charity.

The emergence of Corporate Social Responsibility as a business conduct and as a scientific field can be recorded as follows: The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is not a modern phenomenon. Despite the boom of Corporate Social Responsibility, in recent decades, it exists around us many years. As we have mentioned also in the chapter 2.2, in the mid and late 18th century, companies had turned their interests to employees and more specifically were interested in employees' productivity (Carroll, 2008). However, it is difficult to see whether it was for business reasons, i.e. for reasons of economic efficiency of the company, or if it was for social responsibility reasons. In parallel, the charity was particularly strong and examples of Vanderbilt and Rockefeller testify to the concern of privileged class for the economic survival of the weaker sections of the population. The question, however, of whether was an individual or business philanthropy remains (Carroll, 2008).

From 1930 onwards, companies began to be regarded as institutions, with the same role as governments, and they had to respond to specific social liabilities (Eberstadt, 1973). The industrial revolution in the late 19th century can be considered the starting point for undertaking social initiatives by business. While until the 50s the charity prevailed in the field of social offer of business including mainly donations from charity, from 1953 was perceived the total responsibility of businesses and the need for their involvement in community issues (Murphy, 1978). The publication of Bowen's book "Social Responsibilities of the Businessman" in 1953, defines the start of the time period in which the business sector prevailed in social life and the transition from the term social responsibility to the term corporate social responsibility took place (Carroll,

2008). Bowen had given a definition of corporate social responsibility as: "social responsibility refers to the obligations of entrepreneurs to follow those policies, to make those decisions or to follow those lines of action which are desirable based on the goals and values our society" (Bowen, 1953). For his important contribution Bowen, characterized by many as the "father" of Corporate Social Responsibility.

During the 1960s there was an increased effort to formalization of Corporate Social Responsibility and precise definition of the meaning and content. One of the definitions given during this period was that "CSR refers to the decisions and actions of entrepreneurs decided for reasons not even partially related to direct economic or technical interests of the company" (Davis, 1960). The principal facet, however, of Corporate Social Responsibility continues to be the charity. This period, according to Muirhead (1999) was the period of growth and expansion of business benefits.

During the 1970s, Steiner (1971) noted that "the company is and should remain primarily a financial institution, but shall be help society achieve its key objectives, therefore having social liabilities. The larger a company is, the greater its obligations are" (Steiner, 1971). This definition can be associated today with the theory of stakeholder, as it refers to a variety of researchers (Caroll, 2004). During the same decade there has been a change in the terms that are used to describe actions that benefit the community undertaken by businesses. References to social responsiveness and corporate social performance and corporate social responsibility are made.

The scientific analysis of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility continued by many authors during the decade of 1980. Most prominent of them is the analysis of Tuzzolino and Armandi, who mentioned the need of having an analytical framework to assist the functionality of Corporate Social Responsibility. It is distinguished, in addition, the analysis of Wartick & Cochran, who placed again the dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility in a new framework, who also spoke about principles, procedures and policies (Carroll, 2008). The same period the work of Nobel economist Friedman (1972) is shown, who for first time makes connection of corporate social responsibility and enterprise profitability. Of course, he kept a moderate attitude about Corporate Social Responsibility, indicating that businesses

should seek the maximum profit without violating social norms. Meanwhile, Freeman (1984) developed the theory of stakeholder, which today is considered a key part of the analysis and interpretation of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. According to Freeman, firms have obligations to a wide range of stakeholders and not only to shareholders, and he defined stakeholders as 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives' (Freeman, 1984). The most important contribution in this field was the work of T. Jones (1980), who emphasized and considered Corporate Social Responsibility as a process. Regarding with these issues, companies considered as parts of the social agenda. While Corporate Social Responsibility has now firmly established as a practice in the business world until 1990s, however, the theoretical analysis was extended to include the new theoretical models of corporate social performance and theory of business ethics. New concepts such as sustainability and corporate citizenship, associated with the Corporate Social Responsibility. The implementation of the research concentrated on the relationship between corporate social performance and economic performance. As this decade was associated with highly increased rates of economic globalization and interconnection of markets, corporate benefits to society increased. More multinationals appeared, and they started provided privileges and donations taking also care of public and community issues (Carroll, 2007). Before proceed we must emphasize the contribution of Frederick, who in 1978 presented in his groundbreaking work, whose hypothesis referred to the fact that the era of CSR1 (Corporate Social Responsibility) being gradually replaced by the CSR2 (Corporate Social Responsiveness). The matter was not longer to determine exactly what Corporate Social Responsibility was, but the way that Corporate Social Responsibility can be applied (Dunne, 2007). In 1994, when his article was republished it referred to CSR3: 'which will clarify both the moral dimensions implied by CSR1 and the managerial dimensions of CSR2' (Frederick, 1994).

Since 2000 the emphasis on theoretical approaches on the notion of Corporate Social Responsibility gave way to empirical research and concentrated on Corporate Social Responsibility issues, such as the stakeholder theory, the business ethics, sustainability and corporate citizenship. From businesses perspective the focus has shifted to the

best practices of corporate social responsibility. Corporate Social Responsibility is a vague notion, which is transformed over time, since it is affected by the pressure of society / public, which require companies to take more responsibilities beyond their predetermined legal liabilities (Inyang et al., 2011).

3.2.2 The definition

With the term of corporate social responsibility, we mean the ethical behavior of a business in its relations with society. Specifically, this means that actions of the administration are responsible in relation with other interested members (stakeholders). Due to the complexity of the concept there is no commonly accepted definition, worldwide, although used widely in public debate internationally. Various researchers and institutions have formulated their own definitions. The diversity of definitions is due to a different philosophy, a different degree of development of each country and to the different priorities that exist in different regions.

Despite the fact that the Corporate Social Responsibility started dealing with the economic organizations in the mid 1990s, in Europe and much earlier in the USA, there is no, internationally accepted definition for the description of the term. The European Commission in an effort to promote corporate social responsibility has published in 2001 the "Green Paper" (lit. Report, 2001), which defines Corporate Social Responsibility as: "The concept whereby companies integrate voluntary social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders." Through this text is understood that being a company socially responsible means not only completely fulfilling the legal obligations but goes beyond compliance with the law by investing more in human capital, the environment and relations with interested parts.

Along the same lines moving and many researchers who with their studies have provided similar definitions, with this of Green Paper (Van Marrewijk, 2003; Prieto-Carron et al, 2006; Malovics et al, 2007) or espouse (Scott, 2005; McWilliams et al 2006) McWilliams's and Siegel's (2001) definition, which defines the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility as: "Actions that appear to promote a collective benefit (public good), beyond the interests of the company and beyond the law".

The concept of corporate social responsibility lacks clarity, as it can mean different things to different people. "Corporate Social Responsibility today means something, but not always the same thing, to everybody" (Votaw, 1972). The lack of clarity of what Corporate Social Responsibility means, it includes also a strength. that means that without a widely accepted definition, the Corporate Social Responsibility is here to remain and to means so much simultaneously. (Dunne, 2007). The definitions of the concept can have the same direction, but the perception of different people can differ. For instance, there are researchers (Carlisle and Faulkner, 2004; Carroll, 2004; Lantos, 2001) who argue that Corporate Social Responsibility actions implemented by companies in the form of charity for the common good, and others (Marsden, 2000; Porter and Kramer, 2002) that Corporate Social Responsibility is a part of business strategy for profit and also is why they call it strategic corporate responsibility (Amaeshi and Adi, 2007).

Corporate social responsibility is a fully moral concept. It involves swapping the concept of human welfare and emphasizes the concern for the social dimensions of business activity thus has a direct interest in the quality of life of society where taking place. Corporate Social Responsibility provides a way for businesses in which they can deal with the social dimensions and give some attention to their social effects. The word "liability" implies the obligation that every business organization to the society has, so as to address social problems and to contribute more, beyond their financial services (Sharma and Balvir, 2005).

The whole philosophy and content of corporate social responsibility based on what was stated by Drucker (1954) as: "the company is an organ of society and its actions have a decisive impact on society. It is so important for the management of a company to realize that we must consider the impact of each business policy and business activities in society. Furthermore it is necessary to consider whether any action that applies is likely to promote the common good, to promote the basic belief of society, contribute to the stability, strength and harmony".

The discussions on the social responsibility of companies are not recent. The degree, however, in which corporate social responsibility has been accepted, it reflects

a significant growth of the relationship between capital and civil society (Andriof et al, 2002; Weiser and Zadek, 2000). There is a new role of business in society. But, everyone must be careful as: “Too often, Corporate Social Responsibility is regarded as the panacea which will solve the global poverty gap, social exclusion and environmental degradation” (Marrewijk, 2003).

The fact is that, research provides a variety of definitions for CSR, but the challenge that remains for companies, is not the interpretation of the term, but the comprehension of the implementation of the socio-economic-environmental strategy (Dahlsrud, 2006).

3.2.3 The Dimensions

The Green Paper on the European Communities, divide CSR activities into practices in the internal business operations and practices to ensure the external dimension of their implementation.

Internal Dimension

The CSR actions aimed, in large part, at the right and socially responsible operation of a business. The Green Paper argues that a company should have internal socially responsible practices which primarily involve employees, health and safety, and managing change, while environmentally responsible practices relating to the management of natural resources used by the company.

Regarding social responsible company practices, the Green Paper makes reference to those which would apply properly. So, on the management of human resources is given particular importance in attracting and retaining skilled labor by the firm. These measures include lifelong learning, empowerment of employees, better information throughout the company, better balance between work, family and leisure, greater workforce diversity, equal pay and career prospects for women, profit sharing and share of provision of the share capital and reflecting on employability and job security.

External Dimension

Apart from the internal operation of a company, corporate social responsibility extends and covers a broader set of stakeholders, not limited only to the employees and shareholders, but also addressed to business partners, suppliers, customers, public authorities and NGOs representing local communities, as well with the environment.

Human rights are a very complex issue presenting political, legal and moral dilemmas and are an important part of corporate social responsibility. Another very important part of the issue, touching CSR, is corruption, which is a major development problem which must be faced by businesses. These two issues are very important and reflect the values of the company.

4. Achieving sustainability through attention to human resource factors

As man is one of key resources if not the most important. Endangered resources should be used sparingly. For this reason, sustainability, as we will see, is the key to the use of human resources and also the key to create a culture of sustainability in business.

4.1 The nexus between sustainability and Human Resources Management

The term sustainable human resource management has been used for the last ten years. The work on sustainable HRM is still under investigation and so far is trying to describe the appearance of the phenomenon and its usefulness (Ehnert and Harry, 2012). Unfortunately there is no clear research, and frequently encounters difficulties and ambiguities in definitions. The literature review gives a great variety of interpretation of the term. Instead accepts this variety and also the view that “definitional diversity is to be expected during the emergent phase of any potentially big idea” (Gladwin et al., 1995). Often the definitions differ in their perception of the external and internal results of companies operation. The above is associated with the perception of the continuity of the company in the immediate or distant future.

Sustainability refers to the relationship of today with the distant future and is not a static concept, it has duration. Many efforts to define sustainable HRM have become. And also many terms have been used such as: sustainable work systems (Docherty et al., 2002), HR sustainability (Gollan, 2000), sustainable management of HRs (Ehnert and Harry, 2012), sustainable leadership (Avery, 2005) and of course sustainable HRM (Mariappanadar, 2003) (Kramar, 2014).

As Kramar (2014) states: “the term sustainable human resource management, has also been used to refer to human resource management activities which enhance positive environmental outcomes green human resource management (GHRM), and positive social and human outcomes for their own sake, rather than just as mediating factors between financial outcomes and strategy.” The literature which refers to the differences between sustainable human resource management and strategic human resource management points out that strategic human resource management focuses only in economic targets while the sustainable human resource management includes also social and environmental targets. De Prins et al. (2014) state that De Lange properly puts the differences between the traditional HRM and the sustainable human resource management, as follows:

1. Renewed focus on respect for the internal stakeholders in the organization, the Employees (*Respect*).
2. Environmental awareness and outside-in perspective on strategic human resource management (*Openness*).
3. A long-term approach, both in terms of economic and societal sustainability terms and with regard to individual employability (*Continuity*).

And from the above differences come also the alteration of three P's into ROC: Respect Openness, Continuity (De Prins et al. 2014).

The foundations of the relationship between strategic human resource management and sustainability are located to:

- a) the operation of the HRM that has the greatest potential to incorporate the values and the principles of sustainability within the company (Vickers, 2005; Jabbour and Santos, 2008; Liebowitz, 2010),

- b) Applying the principles of HPM directly related to the economic performance of the business (Jabbour and Santos, 2008; Wagner, 2005)
- c) HRM nowadays has to be effective and efficient in order to meet the needs of all stakeholders (Jabbour and Santos, 2008; Wagner, 2012), and
- d) the observation that not only natural resources are scarce but also people are (Wilkinson et al., 2001; Ehnert and Harry, 2012).

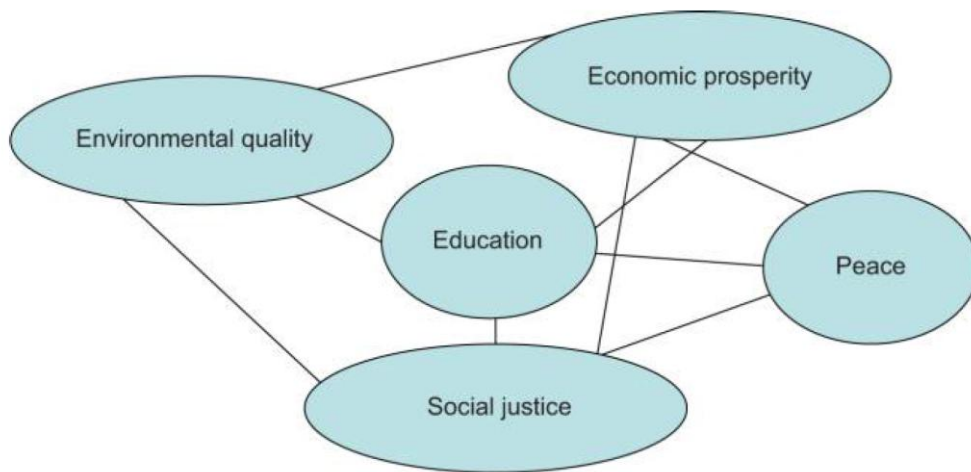


Figure 6 – Interconnectedness of economic prosperity, social justice, environmental quality, Education and peace (Rimanoczy, 2010)

The central idea of sustainable human resource management is contained in the Triple Bottom Line, which typically is found as the 3P's: People, Planet and Profit, (Bolch; Liebowitz, 2010). That means that a corporate hires skillful and conscious People trained and uses them efficiently so as to be more willing to apply the principles of sustainability to help the Planet. Simultaneously, through their abilities, their education and their personal satisfaction, employees will be also able to help businessess to be more Profitable. Rimanoczy and Pearson (2010) interpret the 3 P's as, profits, environmental accountability and social justice. They add two more elements: education and peace, because they believe that education has positive effect on people and those in turn on the environment and business prosperity. Simultaneously the prosperity positively affects the peace of society which again results in increased profits and a positive environmental effect (Figure). The sense of Sustainability, then, embodies both social issues with environmental and all together in continuity with the economy (Jalil, 2010; Liebowitz, 2010). The latest research

suggests that if a company wants the employees to help to protect the environment, it is required to feel and faith to the company's commitment in this direction. So, the company must create a humanistic culture. As stated by Ketter, a supporting manager leads workers to be more dedicated, whereas a non-supportive one achieves the opposite result. As rightly point out from Hahn and Figge (2011), society as a whole will not be able to obtain sustainable development without the help of businesses. Continuing the operational successes cannot be longer translates through economic terms, but through the terms of social justice and environmental wholeness (Taylor et al. 2012). The theoretical views on the relationship between sustainable development and HRM are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – The theoretical views on the relationship between sustainable development and HRM (extended from the source of Savaneviciene, 2014)

Author (year)	Perspective	Approach	The main aspects
Zaugg et al. (2001)	Empirical	Testing of theoretical model of sustainable HRM	The main objectives organizations are seeking by sustainable HRM are revealed
Boubreau (2003)	Theoretical	Sustainability is typically connected to HRM through the traditional HR paradigm	Sustainability encompasses a wide array of dimensions, including those directly affecting workers which connect it with HR policies and practices.
Mariappanadar	Theoretical	Explain sustainable HR strategy using “externality”	Focus on the impact of HRM on externalities, particular social and human
Pfeffer (2007)	Theoretical	Paradoxical organizational behavior	HRM is related to human resource outcomes
Ehnert (2009)	Theoretical	Challenges for HRM	The problem of labor or skills shortage; the problem of self – induced side and feedback effect; paradox tensions for HRM
Ehnert (2009)	Empirical	Practice-based model of sustainable HRM	The main objectives organizations are seeking by sustainable HRM are revealed
Liebowitz (2010)	Theoretical	The role of HR in achieving sustainability	The Triple Bottom Line theory applies also to the HRM
Wagner (2011)	Theoretical	Focus on financially, socially and environmental performance	The management that meets the current needs of a firm and society at large without compromising their ability to meet any future needs.
Ehnert & Harry (2012)	Theoretical	The relations of organizations to environment; The content of HRM	Organization do not “operate in vacuum” (Mariappanader,2003) and the environment is important; the sustainability of the HRM system itself is extremely important
Ehnert (2014); Ehnert & Brandl (2012)	Theoretical	Changing organization-environment relationships	Classical, neo-classical and modern approaches to management are analyzed by introducing the application of the features to HRM

4.2 Sustainable framework

The holistic model of De Prin, that includes four approaches on sustainable human resource management, constitutes one of the most interesting attempts in

research. De Prin supports that Sustainable human resource management should be based on practical and effective use of human capital in an organization which will build a special relationship between the strategy of the business and the environment (Mazur, 2015). Key to successful implementation, is the perception of the long-term which mentioned in the previous chapter, as well as, the perception of business continuity. De Prins model recognizes a holistic view which incorporates four approaches on sustainable human resource management: the sociological, the psychological, the strategic and finally the green. Mazur's framework analyzed in Figure .

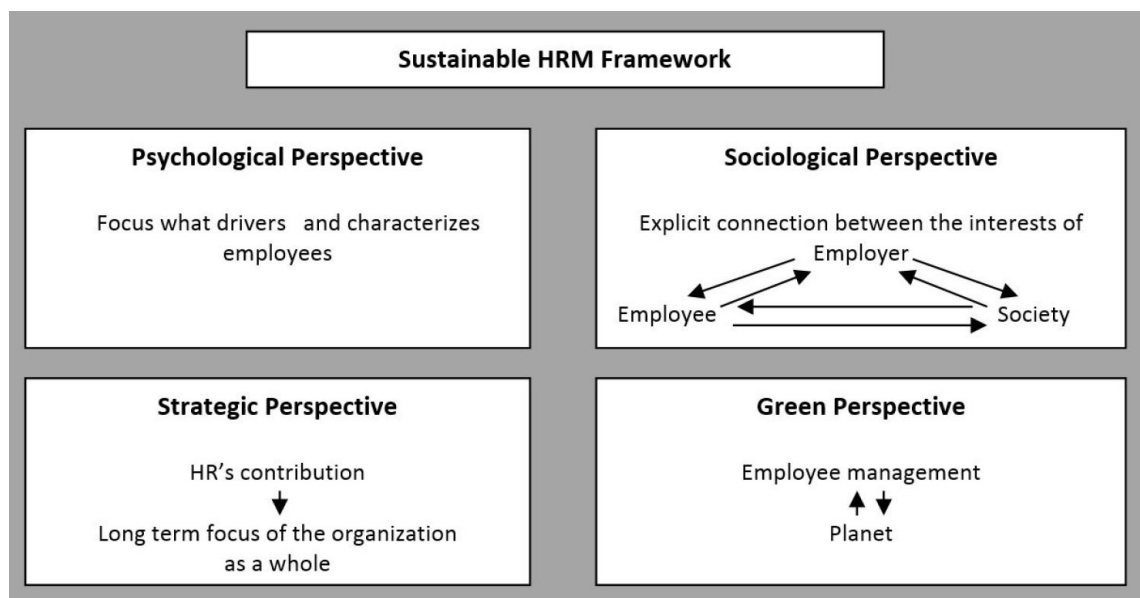


Figure 7 – Sustainable HRM Framework (Mazur, 2015)

The sociological approach, in sustainable human resource management, is illustrated by diversity management. The concept of Diversity Management became widely known in the early 1990s, when it began to be recognized the multiculturalism of society and the reflection of it in businesses. The initiator of the concept, Roosevelt Thomas (1992), was one of them who first pointed out that, in order the diversity to be managed with success, organizations should accept that beyond gender and race there is a great number of other factors which should be taken under consideration. As long

as, we acknowledge that homogenization cannot be achieved in practice corporation should facilitate the coexistence of difference and diversity. Diversity management at the workplace has to do with the understanding of how the particular characteristics of each employee could be exploited for the benefit of any person as also for the entire company in order the greatest possible benefit for all society be achieved. As Mazur (2015), stresses, “managing Diversity is more than a pro-gram. It is an attitude and a new understanding of how enterprises function and how to manage human resources in a sustainable way”.

The psychological approach, in sustainable human resource management, is a typical example of work-life balance. The term work-life balance refers to a rebalancing of claims involving personal and working life of an individual. Such balancing policy, that respects the company's people, customers and operational needs can bring benefits to all. Since the demand for Work-Life Balance, on behalf of workers, expanding rapidly in our time, the strains of human resources should be appropriately prepared (Mazur, 2015). The work-life balance is associated with the prior approach of diversity management because, each person's balance is completely individualized and depends not only on characteristics such as job, years of work, etc., but also by the specific characteristics that make up the personality and behavior of each individual, experiences and special circumstances, the professional and social environment as well as the specific issues that must manage each person (Duxbury and Higgins, 2009).

The strategic approach in sustainable human resource management gives the ability of continuous competitive elements. The fact that the sustainable human resource management is a fundamental long-term competitive advantage for businesses has been analyzed in preceding chapter. Human capital has been identified as a very important resource factor for building a sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Schuler and Jackson, 2005; Kazlauskaite and Buciuniene, 2008).

The green approach in human resource management, finally, identifies the fact that the implementation of green policies in an organization increases the desire of capable and responsible employees to work on it. In this way, then, is created a

competitive environment for attracting qualified workers. Mazur (2015), supports that the relationship of sustainability with strategic human resource management, based on economic competitiveness and maintain competitive advantages. Mandip, (2012) also states that “Green human resource management involves two essential elements: environmentally-friendly HR practices and the preservation of knowledge capital”

4.3 The nexus between Corporate Social Responsibility and Human Resource Management

There are many reasons for that the Human Resource Management is closely related to the Corporate Social Responsibility. Corporate Social Responsibility philosophy can be very helpful at recruiting and retaining qualified staff, especially in a competitive market. It can also contribute significantly to the consolidation of a good atmosphere between the existing staff, especially when members are invited to cooperate in voluntary activities. The progressive companies do not only continue to operate a niche Corporate Social Responsibility, but also the sense of corporate responsibility is so deep and entrenched to them, so that workers, from each section, apply and implement them without intervention.

A socially responsible business, respects the workforce, investing in lifelong programs learning and contributes to training, career development and further development of skills of their employees. Also, the responsible companies implementing Corporate Social Responsibility programs, provide equal professional development opportunities to all, respect for the family and personal lives of workers and their right on free time, caring for the physical and mental health and reward their efforts with money or other benefits. In conclusion people and their relationships are involved to the social and ethical dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility (Lam and Khare, 2010).

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility, relates to the way a company applies the concept of sustainable development, which is based on three pillars: economic, social and environmental. Indicates that a company deals seriously

not only the efficiency and growth, but also the social and environmental impact. Particular attention should be paid, to the expressed concerns of stakeholders: employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers and society in general. The employees are of the more important part of these stakeholders and also their involvement in acts of Corporate Social Responsibility in the enterprise. (Inyang et. al, 2011). It is true that through acts of employees, many actions of Corporate Social Responsibility incurred.

The professionals, in Human Resources are uniquely positioned, so they can cultivate and promote the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility, in order to be benefited both, the businesses and the stakeholders (Strandberg, 2009; Glade, 2008). The HRM department can play the primary role in implementing Corporate Social Responsibility activities (Kramar, 2014; Inyang et. al, 2011). It is essential that while the activities of Corporate Social Responsibility have developed the role of HRM, at the same time, work practices are supported, resulting in more efficient and effective business. As Sharma et al. (2005) note, “the combined impact of Corporate Social Responsibility and HR activities, which reinforce desirable behavior, can make a major contribution in creating long term success in organization”. Here, we must emphasize the essential role of HR Section, to change the culture of an enterprise. The HR staff is likely to be the only department that is professionally trained to change attitudes and behaviors of the executives, managers and employees, by modifying their Human Resource Systems (Liebowitz, 2010). So, in successful organizations, the HRM department is the guardian of culture. And nowadays, organizations and businesses understand the importance of developing and supporting a corporate culture and the role it plays in achieving the business’s vision and goals. Corporate Culture gives people in an organization a sense of collective identity and binds to their beliefs and values .

The modern HR professionals differ, from the traditional administration staff mainly because of their more comprehensive role. Firstly, they have a more comprehensive view, for the company and its operation. Secondly, they make correct and effective use of human capital of the business and often manage to apply changes successfully. They also can apply the principles of sustainability and successfully create

a culture of sustainability, which is a basic factor for the future evolution of sustainable development (Liebowitz, 2010). The integrated involvement of human resources in sustainable development is essential for a successful implementation. It is necessary the active participation of the HRM Section in formulating the company's strategy, in order to use the potentials of all human resources in achieving the objectives of CSR. If the company aspires to implement Corporate Social Responsibility programs, undoubtedly the HR section is key contributor. As mentioned by Mees and Bunham at the Canadian Business for Social Responsibility, "CSR minus HR is just PR" (Liebowitz, 2010).

Conclusions

In the present written work, an effort has been done to make the concepts of Human resource Management, Strategic Human resource Management, Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility explicit and to examine them thoroughly. Also a historical review, on the evolution of all the above concepts has been done, in order to highlight the passing from the strategic human resource management in sustainability. With a first glance in the existing literature, it is revealed that human resource management must utilize all its possibilities of sustainability so as to proceed to the future and to broaden its margins so as to succeed on its strategic goals. Since, businesses participate as a very important part in a wider society and also not having the strength to act independently from it, so the principles of sustainability should not be imposed only for the future viability of the society, but also for the survival of businesses. So it is proved that the relation between sustainability and society is bidirectional.

This paper reveals that there is no a universally recognized definition of sustainability and often the principles of sustainability are incorporated in the business sector, in the concept of corporate social responsibility. This paper also recognizes a) the necessity that sustainability should become part of the management of human relations as well as b) the fact that HRM has entered a new era and needs immediate evolution which can be the sustainable HRM.

Since, sustainable development creates challenges, entrepreneurs and researchers should work to create new models of business within the framework of sustainable development. In this context, perhaps it should be investigated more, the possibility of the contemporary capitalism model to adapt to the new data or not. Also the current economic crisis as it influences every aspect of life is a challenge to search for new models on Sustainable HRM and Sustainable societies. "Sustainable development can be a source of success, innovation and profitability for companies" (Baumgarthner, 2013).

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